

# The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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## International Baptist Men urged to unite in winning world

By Lonnie Wilkey

NASHVILLE (BP) — The world will not be saved without a united, multi-national effort, the president of the nation's largest African American Baptist denomination told an international gathering in Nashville.

"If this world is going to be saved, it is going to be saved by men of all races, classes, and creeds. We've got to learn to love one another," said Theodore J. Jemison.

Jemison, a Baton Rouge, La., pastor and president of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A., Inc., keynoted the opening session of the Sixth World Conference for Baptist Men May 27-30 at the Baptist World Center, headquarters for the 8-million-member denomination.

About 600 people from 17 countries attended the conference sponsored by Baptist World Alliance's Men's Department. It ran concurrently with Baptist Men's University, a training conference of the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis.

Two intense days of conferences, interspersed with evening plenary sessions, were capped off with a neighborhood evangelistic rally at Nashville's Pearl-Cohn High School, featuring Southern Baptist layman and country entertainer Jerry Clower and Jack Stanton, a Southern Baptist evangelist from Bolivar, Mo. Stanton "pinch hit" for E.V. Hill, a National Baptist Convention U.S.A., Inc., pastor who had been scheduled for the rally but was unable to attend.

Before the rally, Stanton led a group of internationals to canvass the area, sharing the gospel and inviting residents to the rally and

a free meal provided by the Tennessee Convention Brotherhood Department's mobile disaster relief feeding unit. The team fed more than 300 meals, reported Cameron Byler, Tennessee Brotherhood director.

Following musical presentations from various countries, humorist Jerry Clower told the crowd that "Christianity works." He emphasized to the international crowd that his achievements in country music, while enjoyable, have not been the most important things in his life. "The greatest thing that ever happened to me was when I became a Christian, and the greatest thing in my life is to tell others that Jesus is the answer," he said.

Stanton, director of the institute of evangelism at Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, Mo., also noted how Christ had changed his life and brought strength. Even in the midst of problems, he said, "God is real... and peace is ours."

Brotherhood Commission President James Williams, in the closing message, challenged Baptist Men to "hunger and thirst for the Word of God" and to develop "roots deep in Christ."

Williams said Christians must be well-grounded in God's Word to avoid being "tossed about."

Besides the plenary speakers, 46 conferences on a myriad of subjects were offered to help Baptist Men in various areas of ministry. Topics and highlights of some of the conferences included:

— **Pulpit-pew relationships.** A healthy relationship "between the pews and the pulpit" is vital to a church's success in ministry, said Leroy Davis, a National Baptist Convention U.S.A., Inc., pastor from Memphis. He observed the

biggest problem between pastors and their congregations is understanding who the real leader of the church is.

"The pastor is not the leader; he's the overseer. The Holy Spirit is in charge and Jesus is the only one who can claim authority. When that is understood, everything else will fall in line," he said.

— **Christian leadership.** A Christian leader is a person "under God's control who's willing to influence God's people to accomplish God's purposes," said Fred Roach, a Southern Baptist layman from Dallas. "It's impor-

tant for a leader to have a right relationship with God and a sensitivity to the spiritual basis of that relationship."

— **Black-white relationships.** Black and white Baptists need to talk with each other formally and informally to overcome barriers that divide them, a multi-ethnic group agreed. "If we are sincerely committed to reaching our world for Christ, we've got to understand each other," said Eddie Pettit, director of Baptist Men for the Brotherhood Commission.

Walter Cade, president of the Baptist World Alliance's Men's Department, said he was pleased

with the meeting, especially with the number of international participants.

"This was one of the best conferences we have had in recent years and I was moved at the number of men from around the world who sacrificed to come," Cade said.

Cade said he especially was touched by the contingent from Cuba, the only communist country represented at the conference. "This was a milestone for them as it was their first men's meeting."

Wilkey is associate editor, Tennessee BAPTIST AND REFLECTOR.

## Active retirement requires planning

NASHVILLE (BP) — Christian believers are called to be active in God's work until the day they die — so they should plan for an active retirement, said an expert on retirement during a workshop at the Sixth World Conference of Baptist Men in Nashville May 29.

David Petty, professor of sociology and gerontology at Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas, speaking on "Retirement by Design," noted retirement is a fairly new phenomenon in the United States.

Plan now for a successful retirement, Petty urged. Being aware of changes to come can help persons cope later.

Retirees face not only physical but also spiritual changes.

"What is spiritual maturity?" Petty asked, noting, "God made us resilient. We can adapt to these changes."

Petty offered practical advice on how to estimate retirement assets, incomes, and expenses. He recalled Christ's words, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21). Petty warned the men not to "rob God" by failing to give of their money to the church.

He urged workshop participants to take care of their

health now for healthier retirement years. Health includes physical and emotional well-being, he said.

Petty called on men to develop good eating habits, get regular exercise, and maintain an appropriate weight. "It's never too late to begin better habits," he said.

Plan to be productive in some other way than your job, Petty said. American society is so geared to the Protestant work ethic that many people closely identify themselves with their work title. They cannot see themselves as productive, except at work. "What happens to your identity when you put that title aside?" he asked.

"Is it possible to replace this work ethic with a leisure ethic?" he asked. Petty urged retirees to make their "recreation" time one of "re-creation," to be creative in their leisure.

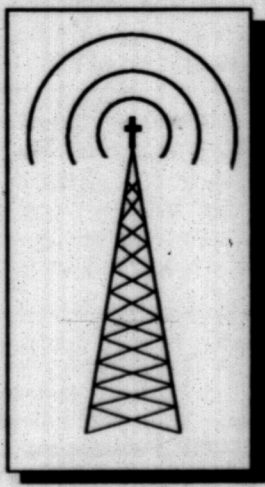
You will gain over 2,340 hours a year by not going in to work each day, Petty said. "What will you do with the time?"

Opportunities for volunteer service abound, he said. "Every community has needs." For Southern Baptists, doors are open for retiree mission volunteers at home and overseas, he noted.

Challenging men to take advantage of these occasions for ministry when they retire, he stated, "You never retire from God's work."

### Network begins

QUITO, Ecuador (EP) — A joint effort by two pioneers in gospel broadcasting will bring the first Christian satellite radio network to Latin America. Trans World Radio and HCBJ World Radio have established a 24-hour service that will be available beginning Nov. 20 to stations in Spanish-speaking countries from the U.S.-Mexican border to the southern tip of Chile. "This is the first time that digital satellite technology will be used to provide high-quality, Christ-honoring radio programming to Latin America on a regular basis," said James Munger, Trans World satellite coordinator. Plans are underway to develop affiliates and distribute existing Spanish broadcasts over the network.



### Passings

PHILADELPHIA, Penn. (EP) — Alfred Dienert, 79, Christian advertising executive and mentor to Billy Graham, died April 28 after a brief illness. In 1950, Dienert and fellow advertising executive Walter Bennett persistently tried to convince Graham to begin a national weekly radio program. Graham refused, but through prayer and perseverance—Graham even began sneaking out of hotels to avoid them—they prevailed upon him and raised the money to begin the radio program that launched his national career. Dienert "was among my five best friends through my life," Graham said.

GAITHERSBURG, Md. (EP) — Edward Gardiner Latch, 92, chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1967-78, died April 9 of a heart ailment. He officiated at the last White House wedding to date, the 1971 nuptials of Richard Nixon's daughter, Tricia. As chaplain, Latch opened the daily House session with prayer, escorted visiting clergy, and counseled members of Congress and their aides.

### Briefly...

#### Korea

SEOUL, South Korea (EP) — About 3,000 Buddhist monks and worshippers demonstrated recently in Seoul to demand that President Kim-Young-sam discontinue regular Christian prayer services in the presidential mansion. Kim took office in February of this year.

#### Russia

MOSCOW, Russia (EP) — President Boris Yeltsin has told religious leaders that the government accepts full blame for abusing the Christian church during communism. Baptist leader Vasili Logvinenko has said many Baptists were persecuted and imprisoned.

#### Romania

ORADEA, Romania (EP) — A dispute over a church building confiscated by the communists in 1952 is headed to the Romanian Supreme Court. The church re-occupied the building but the city's contention that it owns the building has been upheld by lower courts.



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

## English is where it's "at"

Words travel at the speed of a bullet train to every corner of the globe. Word merchants would be wealthy if they charged according to the value of the news by the hearers.

Few things are as precious as the ability to communicate, to read in your own language, and to share this knowledge with others.

Recently the American Bible Society (ABS) celebrated a milestone in the history of Christianity. The event was the publication of Mark's gospel in the Beta language spoken by 500,000 people in Cote d'Ivoire in West Africa.

At least one book of the Bible has now been translated in 2,000 languages. The Wycliffe Bible Translators, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), and other translators continue this vital ministry.

The melting pot of America is now a litany of languages as the tower of Babel continues to haunt us. About 32 million people in America speak a language other than English in their homes. U.S.

News and World Report declares Spanish speakers surged by 50%, Chinese speakers by 98%, Philippines (Tagalog) speakers by 87%, Koreans by 127%, and Vietnamese speakers by 150%, all in the last 10 years. About 80% of all these people are fairly fluent in English.

The 1990 census also revealed that in Mississippi there are 86 languages spoken. Spanish-speaking Mississippians number 25,061; French-speaking, 12,728; and 6,563 speak German. The large Choctaw Indian population now has 4,410 speaking the native language, reports The Clarion-Ledger.

In addition, Bantu, Ilocano, Sierra Miwok, Sinhalese, and Alabama are spoken by Magnolia state residents. Our foreign mission field may be just a block away.

English is rapidly becoming a world language. In 450 A.D., as the Anglo-Saxons crossed the sea to the former Roman province of Britannia, the odds of English becoming a world language were

about one million to one.

To quote Robert Crum in *The Story of English*, "English is where it's at." Of the 2,700 languages in the world, English is said to be the richest in vocabulary.

Contrary to what Professor Higgins said in referring to America — "English hasn't been spoken there in years" — we are still trying. So are other nations in most every part of the world. Reportedly it is England's largest export.

What will this mean in reaching the world for Christ? How can we best use this hunger for English in volunteer missions, short-term mission trips, not to mention radio and television?

What of the thousands of non-English-speaking citizens in Mississippi who strongly desire to speak our language?

Baker James Cauthen once said, "You can travel 18,000 miles to be a missionary, but it's the last 18 inches that really count."

We may be just 18 inches from our best mission opportunities.

## Believers in missions

Broadmoor Church, Jackson, (Jim Futral, pastor) gave \$424,170 to world missions last year through the Cooperative Program. This is 21.2% of its plate offering, and amounts to \$104.32 per member. This ranks Broadmoor eighth among the 38,000 churches in the SBC.

Broadmoor was tops in percentage given among the top 10 churches listed by dollar amount.

Talk about placing your money where your mouth is, Broadmoor people believe it.

First Church, Jackson, gave a

total of \$513,306, or 9.3%, to come in fifth in the top 10. Pastor Frank Pollard and the generous congregation are consistently among the top churches in the nation.

Their walk matches their talk.

Our congratulations to these two churches and also to First, Brandon (Gene Henderson, pastor), Calvary, Tupelo (John Armistead, pastor), and First, Columbus, (Bobby Douglas, pastor). All these churches were above 20% in giving of undesignated gifts.

These percentages really stand

out when compared to:

—SBC average church — 9.1% (down for the sixth year).

—churches pastored by recent SBC presidents — 4.4%.

—churches pastored by SBC Executive Committee members — 7.2%.

The Magnolia State is probably tops in the nation in the fewest churches not giving through the Cooperative Program. Out of 1,978 churches, 83 did not give through CP.

Somebody deserves a pat on the back! — GH

## On the road to Houston...

## Health tips for 1993 SBC messengers

David Baxter and David Anders, medical codirectors of the First Aid Center at the 1991 Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, pass along the following advice for messengers to make conventioning in Houston a happier and healthier experience.

The advice of these two specialists in internal medicine includes:

—If you have a known medical condition, make certain you bring an adequate supply of your prescription medications. Refilling medications while out of town may be difficult.

—Check with your personal physician before leaving home to

see if you should take any medical information with you in the unlikely event you have problems while in Houston (for example: a copy of your most recent EKG test report).

—Anticipate the significant amount of walking that is required for a convention of this size. Make sure your shoes are comfortable enough for walking the distances from hotel to convention center to restaurant, perhaps several miles per day.

—By its nature, the convention is a very busy time. Don't forget to take care of the basics of good health care: adequate rest and

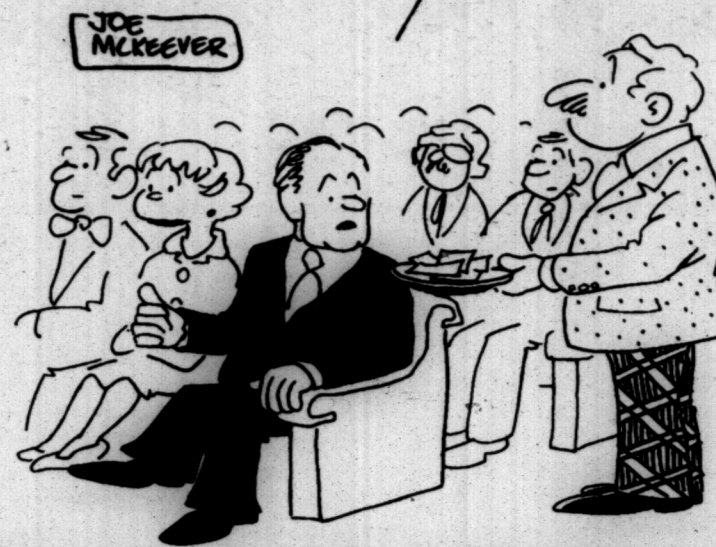
proper food.

—When planning for the convention, don't forget to pack a small medicine kit with the things you're most likely to need. Aspirin (or similar analgesic), bandages, antacids, and decongestants are just a few of the items you probably have in your medicine cabinet at home. Taking a small number of these, properly labeled, may save you the inconvenience of having to purchase these items in an expensive hotel gift shop.

—Finally, wear your seat belt when driving.

— The Baptist Program

NONE FOR ME, THANKS —  
TRY THE HENDERSONS  
DOWN AT THE END OF THE ROW.



## Christian stewardship, or money management?

By Gary Moore

One of the first questions the 85% of Americans who call themselves Christian should ponder is how stewardship differs from secular money management. After spending the 1980s on Wall Street and counseling Christian investors the past few years, I feel there are three differences which are very important.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said anxiety about the economic future is pagan, not Christian (Matt. 6:31-34). Yet many of us still fear the economic future. Ironically, if our fears prevent the prudent financing of the job-creating companies, housing and education future generations will need, we may help our fears become reality. Jesus also told those gathered on the mount that our daily activities cannot serve both God and money (Matt. 6:24). Yet many of us still choose investments and careers or make business decisions solely because they promise the most money.

Peter expressed stewardship truth in 1 Peter 4:10 when he said, "Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God." In Philippians 2:3-4, Paul added, "Do nothing from selfishness... let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." In short, the biblical ethic of stewardship was that neighbors and future generations should be considered in every aspect of life.

But money management in today's more secular world is almost exclusively concerned with "me." What's my return? What's my risk on my money? In a moral and ethical vacuum, the performance rankings and interest rates

which motivate today's investors cannot help them see beyond personal gain. At best, we serve money from Monday through Saturday, and try to repair the moral damage on Sunday and the financial damage through charitable contributions or government programs. God and neighbor are lost from our memories altogether and a "me" generation wanders into the future with a moral compass equipped with a faulty needle.

Milton Friedman has organized these moral philosophies for modern man, much like the Bible did for the ancients. Perhaps the most influential economist of the 1980s, this Nobel Prize winner has said, "our only social responsibility is to make money. Period." In a recent article, Christian sociologist Robert Bellah said that Friedman has established nothing less than a "new moral philosophy or even a new religion." Its creed is that selfishness, rather than God's love, motivates human creativity and economic well-being.

The Old Religion understood financial stewardship as a response to the words of Jesus to "love your neighbor as yourself." The new religion understands money management as a response to the words of Friedman.

As I struggled with this pervasive new religion a few years ago, I wrote that the question for the future was whether America could recapture the sense of social responsibility. Since then, I have only grown more convinced that our nation's future depends on which religion we serve.

Moore is author, *THE THOUGHTFUL CHRISTIAN'S GUIDE TO INVESTING* (Zondervan, 1990).

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# Elder, Hobbs propose "final attempt" to save SBC

From staff and wire reports — A June 14 meeting has been scheduled in Houston — the day before the start of the Southern Baptist Convention there — by Lloyd Elder, former Baptist Sunday School Board president, to discuss with state Baptist leaders a proposal he is circulating for various reforms within the SBC.

Elder has offered research to back up his proposal's contention that "critical" statistical trends in SBC membership and contributions will force the SBC to lay off missionaries and close down agencies and institutions, possibly by the year 2000, unless cooperation is restored.

Meanwhile, retired Oklahoma City pastor Herschel Hobbs has endorsed Elder's proposal. Hobbs,

85, is esteemed as an elder statesman by many Baptists, and he said this is his final attempt to be a peacemaker in the SBC.

Elder's 15-page document, titled "Calling the Family Back Together: A Research Report to the Southern Baptist Family," calls for broadened participation in SBC annual meetings and in appointment of trustees for SBC agencies.

The June 14 meeting, to which state Baptist convention presidents, executive directors, and board chairmen have been invited, will begin at 8 p.m. in Houston's Four Seasons Hotel adjacent to the George R. Brown Convention Center, site of the SBC's June 15-17 annual meeting.

Concerning the meeting with state Baptist leaders, Elder voiced

openness to representatives attending from the SBC and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a national organization of Baptist moderates.

Selected representatives of Baptist news media also could attend the meeting, Elder said, but otherwise it will be closed to the public because the room to be used has a 120-seat capacity.

Both Hobbs and Elder admitted they would be surprised if the conservative powerbrokers who have assumed leadership in the SBC would relinquish control, as Elder's plan would require.

Morris H. Chapman, SBC Executive Committee president, strongly disagreed with Elder's proposal (see related story on this page). Cecil Sherman, CBF coordinator,

could not be reached for comment.

Hobbs said he received a phone call from Chapman on June 3, moments before a conference call between himself, Elder, and reporters was to begin. Chapman told Hobbs what he and Elder were doing was "divisive," Hobbs said.

During the SBC annual meeting, Elder predicted, some sort of effort likely will unfold to present the proposal, or something similar, to local church messengers.

"I do not have a designed way that it will happen," Elder said. He said he will not do it in one-man fashion but, "I believe someone will come forward with a substantive motion."

Elder said he has received a sizable favorable response to the proposal, with two or three negative responses, after mailing 6,300 copies of it to national, state, and local church and missions leaders in mid-May. He said he has ordered a reprint of 10,000 copies, using donations he has received.

Elder's proposal includes 20 "action plans" toward ending the theological-political controversy in the SBC dating back to 1979.

After an initial action plan calling for a general recommitment to missions, other parts of Elder's proposal include:

- reducing the SBC president's appointment power by half. Under the proposal, one of each eligible state convention's two members on the SBC Committee on Committees, for example, would be elected by those conventions. The SBC president would select each

state's other member of the Committee on Committees.

- allowing each state to select its eligible first, third, and fifth representatives on the SBC Executive Committee, Foreign and Home Mission Boards, Sunday School and Annuity Boards, the six SBC seminaries, and other commissions and boards. The Committee on Nominations, named by the broadened Committee on Committees, would select the other state representatives on SBC boards.

- initiating SBC "regional voting conventions" at 36 to 72 sites within a four-hour drive from messengers' churches. Some 200,000 messengers, Elder says, could participate in a live, simultaneous network for conducting SBC business, using modern video technology.

- scheduling SBC meetings every other year rather than annually.

Such changes, Elder writes, would be made via amendments to the SBC Constitution and Bylaws.

Hobbs, in an interview with Baptist Press, said when he received Elder's proposal in the mail, "I said to myself, 'This is it... the first really well-thought-out thing I have seen'" toward resolving the SBC controversy.

Earlier this year, Hobbs issued a call for SBC and CBF leaders to hold a summit-type meeting in Houston, but Chapman and Sherman both discounted the idea.

Hobbs, in the telephone news conference, called the proposal "one last hope" of involving more (See HOBBS on page 10)

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## The Baptist Record

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### Executive Committee president disagrees with Elder's proposal

By Art Toalston

NASHVILLE (BP) — It's unwise and unneeded, reacted Morris H. Chapman to a proposal by Lloyd Elder for changes in how the Southern Baptist Convention nominates trustees to denominational entities and conducts its annual meetings.

Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, said in a written statement June 3: "Lloyd Elder is attempting to introduce a polity (form of governance) into this Convention which is a total departure from time-honored, historic Southern Baptist practice."

Elder, professor of biblical studies and preaching at Nashville's Belmont University who was Baptist Sunday School Board president from 1983-91, calls in his proposal, circulated since mid-May, for state Baptist conventions to elect half of the trustees for the SBC's various boards, commissions, and other committees.

Chapman, disagreeing with the idea, stated: "For state conventions to have authority to select any officials for the Southern Baptist Convention or its agencies implies that the SBC should have authority to select some officials for state conventions."

"Either application of that concept, commonly called connectionalism, has been strongly rejected from the beginning of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Chapman also stated: "If the Southern Baptist Convention were to adopt the policies suggested by Elder, it would drive the controversy deeper into the state conventions," referring to the theological-

political controversy in the SBC which broke into the open at the annual meeting in 1979 in Houston.

"Instead of one struggle," Chapman added to Baptist Press, "you would have 36 state Baptist convention struggles throughout the SBC."

**Lloyd Elder is attempting to introduce a polity into this Convention which is a total departure from... historic Southern Baptist practice."**

— Morris Chapman

Elder's proposal, titled "Calling the Family Back Together: A Research Report to the Southern Baptist Family," has been circulated to several thousand national, state, and local Baptist leaders.

Herschel Hobbs, 85, an oft-quoted retired Oklahoma pastor and former SBC president, publicly endorsed the proposal June 3.

Elder and Hobbs have invited state Baptist convention presidents and other leaders to a June 14 meeting in Houston to discuss the proposal.

Chapman cited a book by James L. Sullivan, BSSB president from 1953-75, *Baptist Polity As I See It*, in which Sullivan writes that for one Baptist body, such as a state Baptist convention, to insist on nominating persons to another Baptist body, such as the SBC, "is a trend toward a hierarchical structure and should be discouraged."

"This should be seen as a gross

violation of Baptist polity," Sullivan writes. "For autonomous bodies to remain autonomous, they must nominate and elect their own officers as a matter of ongoing policy."

Chapman also took issue with Elder's stated motivation that, in making his proposal, he hopes to reverse downturns in SBC missions giving, membership, and baptisms. Elder, in his proposal, added charts to illustrate downturns in each area.

"He (Elder) is crying 'wolf' and 'the sky is falling,'" Chapman stated. "But, our house is not collapsing, and our sky is not falling. Southern Baptists are on the mend. We are moving forward."

"There are some unhappy trends among the happy trends, but those trends have been in effect since the 1950s. Lloyd Elder fails to mention this, for obvious reasons."

"You will search his brochure in vain for word that giving to SBC causes is up this year, as are foreign mission applications."

"You will not read that Annie Armstrong (offering for home missions) was a record, that while most other denominations are declining, Southern Baptists add 2,400 new members and four new churches each week."

"He neglected to mention that overseas baptisms were at a record high, that black church starts were up 50% and that Brotherhood involvement is the highest it's been in 25 years. The list goes on and on."

Toalston writes for Baptist Press.

### Batesville mission named center for River Ministry

On Friday, May 21, the West Batesville Baptist Mission in Batesville was dedicated as a center of the Mississippi River Ministry with a health fair.

Cleophus Rawls, pastor of the mission, said that 94 persons were given health screenings.

Medical personnel from the Panola County Health Department, Oxford Baptist Hospital, and Northwest Mississippi Community College provided volunteers.

### State's May CP gifts up

Mississippi Baptists gave \$1,563,544 through the Cooperative Program in May, making 1993 gifts total \$8,858,609, according to Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

The 1993 total is \$71,269 (or .80%) less than that given in the same period of last year, but the May amount is \$123,497 (or 8.57%) more than that given in May of 1992.

Richard Brogan, consultant with the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board who led in worship at the dedication, told participants of ministries being planned.

"Doors of opportunity are opened to do ministry in Jesus' name," said Brogan, "to begin new units of work, and to be open in prayer to ask God for a vision to make a difference in someone's life."

The 22 Mississippi counties in the Mississippi River Region will have special ministries handled by local and visiting volunteers in the area beginning in 1994.

For details, contact Brogan at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205, phone 968-3800.

The January-May total is \$496,391 (or 5.31%) under the pro rata budget. The pro rata amount is figured by dividing the year's budget by 12 and multiplying by the number of months elapsed.

The 1993 Cooperative Program budget is \$22,452,000. This budget was voted by messengers to the Mississippi Baptist Convention last November. A total of 37% goes to Southern Baptist causes outside the state.



# Caution urged in responding to petitions now circulating

By Paul G. Jones II

A recent spate of petitions has again called attention to an oft-used and generally ineffective means of communicating with political, social, and business leaders.

Many people assume that key leaders seriously consider petitions before making important decisions. However, conversations with many leaders point out that most petitions are, at best, ignored and often destroyed upon arrival — on instructions of the recipient.

A study of petitions indicates that most fall into three readily-identifiable categories. The true purpose of a petition is often not evident to the person signing or distributing it.

## Blind petition

A blind petition does not indicate its source or provide adequate information on how to submit the petition to a person or group dealing with the issue.

The purpose of a blind petition is to create, or continue, a false issue or rumor. Such petitions are often started by people seeking to embarrass some highly-respected group or individual and make them look foolish.

Several blind petitions regularly resurface to unnecessarily incite and then embarrass religious groups and other well-intentioned people.

One such petition claims that longtime atheist Madelyn Murray O'Hair has filed petition No. 2493 with the Federal Communications Commission to remove religious broadcasting from radio and television. The petition is bogus and, according to O'Hair's Christian son, was created by his mother to make the church look silly.

This petition is quickly identifiable as a blind petition, since there is no source or specific information given that would allow for a meaningful response. Its purpose is obviously to mislead and deceive.

## Fund-raising petition

A fund-raising petition informs of a problem or issue that is generally legitimate, but asks the concerned person to return the petition to the source with a "generous contribution."

A fund-raising petition will always have the name and address of the source but no means of communicating directly about the problem.

tion hold to the adage, "There's a sucker born every minute."

## True petition

The true petition addresses a valid issue. It identifies the source, clearly suggests actions, and provides a contact who can make a difference (such as an elected official).

The purpose of a true petition is to inform about a legitimate issue and provide a means of legitimate action without a third party.

Even a true petition is of marginal value, however, when measured against personal visits, telephone calls, personal letters, and telegrams.

Recipients of true petitions know that people will sign almost anything, and its value is thus greatly diminished. A true petition should be used only as reaffirmation of prior, more personal communication.

The rash of petitions being circulated should

cause believers to closely examine any petition presented to them. Blind petitions and fund-raising petitions should not be used. True petitions should be used sparingly.

Information on specific petitions is available from the Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800.

Jones is executive director, Christian Action Commission.

## O'Hair petition legend persists despite being discredited

It has been well more than a decade since rumors first started that the nation's most visible atheist had filed a petition with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to ban all religious programming from the airwaves.

She didn't, but that hasn't stopped the rumors. In fact, every six to nine months, it makes the rounds again, and well-meaning Christians begin circulating their own petitions of protest that claim the FCC has granted Madelyn Murray O'Hair a hearing.

There is no hearing. There is no petition.

The FCC has issued the following statement concerning the supposed O'Hair petition (Note: Some rumors have tagged the supposed petition as No. 2493, a real — but unrelated — FCC petition from California.):

"Petition number 2493 has resulted in millions of letters and telephone calls to the commission since 1975. This petition was denied by the FCC on Aug. 1, 1975, over 17 years ago. The commission is required by the First Amendment to take a neutral position toward religion, acting neither to promote nor to inhibit it. Madelyn Murray O'Hair, a well-known atheist's name, continues to be associated with the false petition, even though she has never filed a petition with the FCC."

The purpose of a fund-raising petition is to provide money to the source. The issue is of little concern and the "generous contribution" is the primary motivation.

If a fund-raising petition is forwarded directly to the people deemed responsible for the problem, it is recognized for what it is and normally disposed of without interest or response.

The fund-raising petition is the most obvious, and its self-serving purpose is very evident.

In difficult financial times, even legitimate groups often turn to fund-raising petitions to increase giving, in the belief that the ends justify the means.

Less legitimate groups often target the poorer segments of society or those who believe they have been "left out." Highly technical demographic studies can be purchased that allow such groups to identify easy prey.

Those who use this type of peti-



## Drumbeat of evangelism

Steve Evans, Southern Baptist missionary from Brownwood, Texas, records the accompanying drums that pound out the cadence for a Yao dancer in Maudzu, Malawi. The recording will play on Yao-language radio programs that are broadcast twice daily to several countries in an effort to communicate the gospel to listeners. (BP photo by Charles Ledford)

## New videos designed to "show" Sunday School workers how to teach

NASHVILLE — While ministers of education and Sunday School directors do their best to explain to workers how to teach a Sunday School class, as the old saying goes, "a picture is worth a thousand words."

With that thought in mind, the Baptist Sunday School Board is releasing six new 60-minute training videos designed to help churches make their Sunday Schools the week's best Bible learning experience for all age groups.

"Videos offer one of the most effective tools for training Sunday School workers," said Dan Phillips, media design editor in the youth-adult department of the BSSB's church growth-Sunday School division.

"Many people can't make it to

extended training sessions, but they can find time to watch a training video in their own home. And they can go at their own pace, too," he said.

The videos include:

— "Youth Sunday School — A Live Demonstration Video."

— "Teaching Bible Discoverers, Third and Fourth Graders."

— "Teaching Fours and Fives at Church," "Teaching Twos and Threes at Church," and "Teaching Babies and Ones at Church."

The youth training video is available now, the adult training video is scheduled for release in June, the preschool videos in July, and the children's video in August.

To order, or for more information, call the BSSB Customer Service Center at 1-800-458-2772.

## Call to action...

## Senate Commerce Comm. to consider alcoholic beverage warning messages

By Elizabeth K. Holmes

The Sensible Advertising and Family Education Act (S. 674) to require health and safety warning messages on alcoholic beverage advertisements is alive and moving through the U.S. Senate. The companion bill in the U.S. House of Representatives is H.R. 1823.

S. 674 covers any advertisement broadcast on radio or television—including cable—or printed in magazines, newspapers, and promotional displays. It requires a series of seven rotating health messages about alcohol.

In print and promotional materials, the messages are more comprehensive than those for broadcast and will also include a toll-free telephone number for

additional information and referrals.

The Senate Commerce Committee is ready to vote on S. 674 at any time. Members of the committee need to hear from constituents so their vote can represent the people who elected them.

Mississippi Senator Trent Lott is a member of the committee, and his office would like to hear from as many citizens of the state as possible. Lott's Washington office telephone number is (202) 224-6253.

Immediate calls are urgently needed. Ask Lott to sign on as a sponsor and vote to support S. 674.

The Christian Action Commis-

sion (CAC) would like to hear from callers to determine additional support for this effort. After talking with Lott's office, please inform CAC of the response received by calling (601) 968-3800.

Organize friends and neighbors to call Lott's office, and follow up with a letter or note. Together we can assist with legislation that warns persons of the dangers of alcoholic beverages.

For additional information, call the CAC at (601) 968-3800, or write to Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Holmes is consultant for women's and children's issues, CAC.

## SBC Cooperative Program May gifts up more than 4%

NASHVILLE (BP) — Cooperative Program receipts for May were up more than 4% compared to the same month a year ago, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

All gifts to the SBC Cooperative Program and designated, are

above last year at this eight-month period of the SBC fiscal year: \$198,142,660 compared to 1992 of \$198,071,136, or a .04% increase.

"The healthy increase in the Cooperative Program receipts for May is another good sign of the great spirit which exists among Southern Baptists," Chapman said.



# Barri Shirley elected to board's accounting, personnel position

Barri A. Shirley was elected Tuesday by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Executive Committee as director of accounting and personnel services. He replaces William Maxwell who joins the Tennessee Baptist Convention in July as business manager. Shirley will begin service June 14.

Shirley, 24, is an auditor with the accounting firm of KPMG Peat Marwick of Jackson where he has worked since January of 1992. Last year he audited the books of the convention board.

Earlier, he worked for the Mississippi Bankers Association as insurance administrator, trade show manager, and order processor and educational coordinator from June 1989 to November 1991.

A magna cum laude graduate of Millsaps College in Jackson,



Shirley

Shirley is a Certified Public Accountant.

Shirley and his wife Tammy have one son, Christian, age six months. They are members of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Jackson, where Shirley serves on the capital stewardship committee.

Jennings Orr, administrative assistant for business, said that after Shirley audited the MBCB's books last year, "he felt the Lord was calling him to full-time Christian work. He heard about the opening and applied. So he already has a knowledge of our operations."

Shirley's parents are Eugene and Monnie Shirley of Apopka, Fla. The elder Shirley is a graduate of William Carey College and New Orleans Seminary. An elementary school teacher, he preaches and leads music bivocationally.

## Ankerberg attacks, Lewis defends HMB Freemasonry recommendation

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptists could be guilty of "one more blow against the purity of the historic Christian Faith" if the convention approves a stance on Freemasonry recommended by the Home Mission Board, according to John Ankerberg, host of a weekly issues-oriented nationally syndicated telecast.

The Southern Baptist Convention is scheduled to vote in Houston on an HMB recommendation that membership in Masonic lodges be a matter of individual conscience and local church decision-making.

"This is the beginning of a clear victory for the Lodge," Ankerberg wrote in a letter to his mailing list. Ankerberg attends Brainerd Church in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Meanwhile, HMB President Larry Lewis has written a letter to state Baptist newspaper editors, commenting: "I believe God has intervened" in deliberations by HMB directors leading to the Freemasonry recommendation "in what could have been an extremely

divisive issue."

Lewis defended the HMB recommendation, stating, "...ours is not a hierarchical denomination that dictates beliefs of churches and members. Therefore, consistent with the doctrines of the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church, the report recommends 'membership in a Masonic Order be a matter of personal conscience.'"

"This doesn't imply people can believe whatever they want.... The report exhorts Southern Baptists to prayerfully examine Freemasonry in light of the scriptures 'as led by the Holy Spirit of God.' That isn't a cop-out... it's Baptist!"

Ankerberg, in his critique, waged numerous other challenges to the HMB recommendation and the Interfaith Witness Department's Freemasonry study. He charged it has "a Masonic agenda" and is "biased scholarship."

Lewis, in his letter to state Baptist papers, nevertheless defended the Interfaith Witness Department

study as "a scholarly examination of the teachings of and charges against Freemasonry.... However, our focus needs to be on the only document which is scheduled to be presented to the Houston Convention — the six-page report from the HMB directors," Lewis wrote. "The report includes a summary of the findings of the board about the teachings of Freemasonry, both positive and negative."

Martin King, HMB public relations director, stated Ankerberg "doesn't have a basic understanding of the events."

"In his letter to his supporters, Dr. Ankerberg underlines for emphasis a number of words and phrases in the summary of the report. However, Dr. Ankerberg left out as unimportant such phrases as 'priesthood of the believer,' 'autonomy of the local church,' 'the teachings of the Scripture,' and 'led by the Spirit of God.' Those aren't unimportant phrases. They are just as vital as the remainder of the statement."

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BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 5



NASHVILLE — Don Blasingame of Mississippi leads a workshop on agricultural missions at the Sixth World Conference of Baptist Men in Nashville, May 27-30. (BP photo by Bill Bangham)

## Agricultural missions can feed the world

NASHVILLE (BP) — The way to feed the world is to involve churches in an agricultural missions project, a retired agricultural professor told a group at the Sixth World Conference of Baptist Men May 27-30 in Nashville.

Baptists will give money cooperatively to missions through "the Cooperative Program, but when they get involved, even if just to raise money for a project, they learn, pray, and get personally involved, said Don Blasingame of Starkville.

He is the former coordinator of the National Fellowship of Baptist Agriculturalists, which is sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis.

Fifteen million people die each year from malnutrition. Missionaries have learned spiritual needs are masked by physical needs, said Blasingame. To meet the world's physical needs, Southern Baptists support about 50 agricultural foreign missionaries. Only 50 additional agricultural missionaries are supported by other denominations.

Blasingame added response should be developed with on-site information. Some expensive projects without such information have been ineffective, Blasingame noted.

"We don't bring in John Deere tractors and four-row cotton-pickers but we use what they have to help them," said Blasingame. Response also should be coordinated through the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., he added.

And local needs can't be ignored, he stated. Baptists also should do agricultural missions at home. Troubled youth could be involved in a gardening project that would provide their families with produce. Produce from a garden could be used in a feeding program for poor people. Children or youth could help nursing home residents nurture gardens, he proposed.

Baptists "cannot set up a welfare system for the rest of the world," but can "help people feed their families better than they're doing now," Blasingame said.

## Brotherhood to honor Greenwood RA leader

MEMPHIS — Glenn Shows, 44 of Greenwood, is one of 13 who will be honored with the

Award of Merit presented by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's International Legion of Royal Ambassadors Leaders during the National Brotherhood Breakfast in Houston June 16.

Royal Ambassadors is the Brotherhood Commission's missions education program for boys in grades one through nine. The

Award of Merit is the highest RA leadership award given by the Brotherhood Commission.

Shows, RA counselor at First Church, Greenwood, also serves as associational RA director for LeFlore County and RA area coordinator for 11 counties in Mississippi.

His involvement with the Royal Ambassador program has been an influence in his Christian development. "Working with RAs has provided me the opportunity to strengthen the talents and abilities God has given me," Shows said. "RAs has provided me encouragement as I have seen boys mature into Christian young men," he added.



## NOBTS awards doctoral degrees

Mississippi students who received doctoral degrees from New Orleans Seminary during commencement exercises are, left to right, Robert Boyd, Meridian, doctor of ministry; Daniel Caldwell, Caledonia, doctor of philosophy; Chuck Grant, Magnolia, doctor of philosophy;

Landrum P. Leavell II, seminary president; John Herring, Saitillo, doctor of ministry; Greg Martin, Long Beach, doctor of ministry; and Brad Roderick, Jackson, doctor of philosophy.



# Jerry Rankin: God's purpose lies ahead for SBC missions

By Robert O'Brien

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Beware if you book passage on the Orient Express.

It's not a journey for the faint of heart — especially these days. You could end up as president of the Foreign Mission Board.

Jerry Allen Rankin stands on the verge of that destination 23 years after he and his wife, Bobbye, embarked for Indonesia as missionaries.

Three men before him — two on slow boats to China — departed for Asian mission fields over the past seven decades and rose through the ranks to become area administrators and then Foreign Mission Board chief executives.

Rankin, area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific since 1987, could follow M. Theron Rankin, Baker James Cauthen, and R. Keith Parks on the final leg of that journey on June 14 in Houston.

That's when FMB trustees will gather to deliberate on the unanimous recommendation of a 15-member search committee to elect the 51-year-old Mississippian as the board's 10th president.

Rankin's name "percolated" to the top, one committee member said, after 14 months of deliberations as the committee worked against a volatile backdrop of Southern Baptist theological and political discontent.

"The whole pluralism of our trustee board is represented on that committee, and it's an act of God — if I ever saw an act of God — that the group came through with a unanimous decision," said committee chairman Joel Gregory of Dallas.

If elected, Rankin will have to find a miracle of his own to maintain missions advance in an environment of eroding finances, trust, and morale. But he would enter the task, he said, with "absolute confi-

dence God has a purpose for Southern Baptists and will point us in the right direction at the right time."

Ever since he walked the aisle at a Billy Graham crusade at age 10, then heard God's call to missions while studying Asia in an eighth grade geography class, Rankin has developed two growing convictions: God has the power to enable all things, and those things will happen in God's timing.

"When I heard Billy Graham preach I understood for the first time that I was a sinner," Rankin said. "As I grew as a Christian I learned I had the responsibility to submit to God's will."

That experience became home base at each point of his career. "At each step along the way, when I've gone back to try to identify God's call, I've found myself all the way back at my salvation experience. When I opened my heart to accept Christ as Savior I had a sense of peace, and I can recall thinking I wished everyone could have this experience." From the time he began preaching as a 16-year-old, Rankin headed inexorably toward Asia — he thought to India.

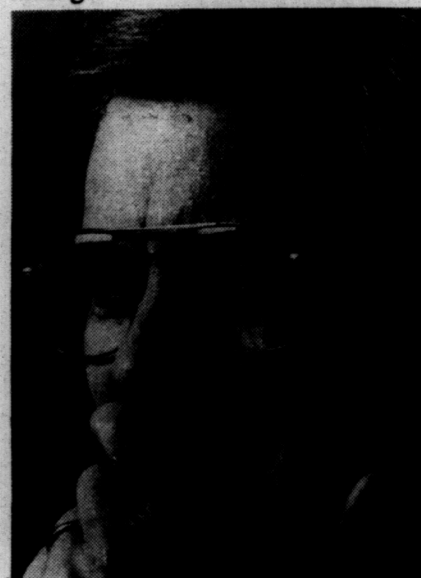
But high school and college in Clinton brought a healthy mix of other pursuits. He played football and saxophone, excelled academically, served as Baptist Student Union president, wrote sports news, took part in student government — and dated "a beautiful girl named Bobbye" Simmons, his future wife.

Several years later, when he and Bobbye neared missionary appointment, visa problems denied them their chosen mission field of India. Thinking they had misread God's call, they and their two children packed up for Indonesia.

Ten years as a church planter in

Indonesia seasoned the missiology Rankin had learned from Professor Cal Guy at Southwestern Seminary and put him in a place of "tremendous spiritual revival."

And it taught him about God's timing.



Rankin

Area Director Bill Wakefield, now FMB vice president for Asia, asked for a volunteer from the Indonesia mission to go to India for three months to consult on church growth.

"You can imagine what flamed up in our hearts having felt that call to India almost 10 years earlier," Rankin said.

That three months, and other visits to develop church growth strategy and train pastors, set the stage for Rankin's greatest mission field contribution: helping start 400 new churches in India over a 10-year period. Then he took his consulting skills to other countries in the region.

"The irony of it is that maybe Bobbye and I didn't mistake the call to India," he reminisced. "It just came in God's timing and in

his way. Ten years later, we found ourselves consulting there in church growth and five years after that supervising all the work in India."

That role was one job along the way in increasing responsibility given Rankin as he demonstrated increasing organizational and administrative skill.

The time in Indonesia taught Rankin something else — a defining quality of his life and style as a missionary and administrator.

"I was hit by my own inadequacy and that I had no business being there without the empowering of the Holy Spirit and assurance of God's presence in my life," he said.

Every morning about 4:30 Rankin arises to "spend an hour or two with the Lord" in prayer and Bible study. It's part of his long pilgrimage toward the Spirit-filled life.

His pilgrimage, he said, has led both to a source of power through God's Spirit and to misunderstanding by some who label him a charismatic who speaks in tongues.

That charge led the FMB presidential search committee to subject Rankin to one of the most intense examinations he has had on any subject. Chairman Joel Gregory said a thorough investigation, which ranged from the United States to the mission field, "totally satisfied" the committee that Rankin "does not practice, teach, or advocate glossolalia and has held true to Baptist doctrine."

But Rankin accepts the validity of spiritual gifts and will not criticize their use. He does so on the basis of his belief in the Bible, which teaches about gifts of the Spirit, and his observation of their power at work in Asia.

During his biblical studies, he "came to the conviction and deliberate decision that you cannot dis-

count any portion of the Bible for any reason and still hold to the absolute authority of the Word of God." He said he believes "God inspired Scripture in its entirety and that his Holy Spirit continues to illumine it today."

"Therefore, I cannot in conscience throw out any portion of the Bible, either on the basis of ultra-dispensationalist theory (which dismisses some gifts of the Spirit) or on the basis of higher criticism," he said.

Rankin, though quick to laugh and open to ideas, expresses his beliefs seriously and forthrightly and administers with a decisiveness and independent-minded style some have called autocratic.

He sees his style as collaborative, but admits he believes in streamlining administrative structures, moving authoritatively, and minimizing group decisions.

"When everyone is involved in a decision, it usually results in what's acceptable to everyone and threatening to no one," he explained. "That usually reduces it to a fairly mediocre common denominator — and stifles innovators and visionaries."

No one can say Rankin lacks confidence in his ability to lead.

But he tempers the confidence with a healthy dose of awe and trepidation as he stands in line to provide spiritual and administrative leadership to the far-flung work of 3,900 missionaries in 129 countries.

The wife of the late M. Theron Rankin, the board's seventh chief executive, once said: "Theron was just an ordinary man with the world inside his heart."

That description links the two Rankins closer than even the family roots Jerry believes they both share.

O'Brien writes for FMB.

## U.S. link boosts Belarussian ministry as religious freedom takes firm hold

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP) — As the doors of religious freedom have swung open, Baptists in the republic of Belarus have taken their first steps of religious freedom in nearly seven decades.

But, unlike those of a small child first learning to walk, their steps have become almost a gallop to make up for lost time.

Their pace was evident to six Missouri Convention representatives who visited the former Soviet republic for a series of listening and planning sessions with Belarussian Baptist leaders in April — the first step in developing a multi-year partnership mission project.

During the visit, the Missourians met with representatives of the Evangelical Union of Christians-Baptists and with Foreign Mission Board workers Dan and Libby Panter, Mississippi natives who transferred from Togo to Belarus two years ago.

Panter said Belarussian Baptists

are "excited and supportive of Southern Baptist missionary work because they have become disillusioned with groups that come and stay a week but then are never heard from again."

At least 800 different religious groups, sects, and cults currently are working in the former Soviet republics, Panter said, making them a "highly competitive market."

The Missouri group saw a new "Baptist complex" being developed under the leadership of the union's president, Ivan Bukatyi, to include offices, a training center, and housing for senior adults and orphans.

Workers have gone into forests to cut trees for lumber for the Baptist facility. Other building materials have been purchased and are stacked around the construction site. Workers were busy with temporary buildings for people who will construct the new complex when funds are available.

Don Wideman, Missouri Convention executive director, in

meetings with Belarussian Baptist leaders, emphasized Missouri Baptists' role in a partnership: "We consider you our equals in every way, inferior in no way, and superior in some ways. We do not intend to come as supervisors or directors to take over the work of Belarussian Baptists. If there are ways we can help, we are interested in working with you."

Several Belarussian representatives reviewed the work in their regions and talked about specific needs. Each shared stories of unfinished church buildings, new congregations, and turning children away from overcrowded Sunday School classes.

The Missourians said they never sensed the Belarussians were expecting assistance in any way. In fact, the senior pastor of the Grodno region emphasized that point.

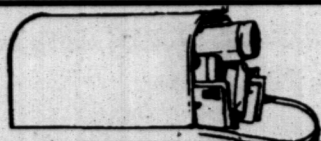
"The problems and needs we have, we must solve on our own," said Paul Rudoy. "But we are glad that you have chosen to come here."



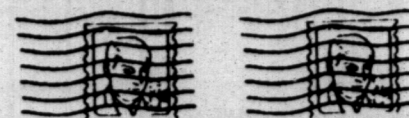
## Developing leadership skills

Kim Prime (center), from the Baptist Student Union at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, listens attentively during a small group discussion on leadership at a May conference in Nashville sponsored by the national student ministry department of the Baptist Sunday School Board. Prime was one of approximately 100 students from 15 states attending the Special Training Program for BSU leaders. Prime, a member of First Church, Vancleave, will also serve as a summer missionary to New York. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)





# Letters to the editor



## "Laborers are few"

Editor:

We, Southern Baptists, say that we are a mission-minded people. In reality, we eat lots of meals, attend lots of meetings, and do very little actual mission work (1 John 3:18). Let's get up from the table, end our discussions, and do some mission projects. "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few" (Luke 10:2).

Bill Kent Jr.

Brotherhood Director  
Franklin Association  
Meadville

## Masonic accusations

Editor:

I would like to respond to the letter written by Bennett Blanton of Houston about "False teachings of Masonry" (Baptist Record, May 27), and the letter written by Mollie H. Miller of Grenada about "Symbolism used in the Masonic Lodge" (Baptist Record, May 27).

Blanton is correct in stating that God is Creator of all things and that he is the Father of all saved people only. The balance of his accusations against Freemasonry are completely false.

Miller is correct in stating that symbolism is used in Freemasonry, but the way she described the real meaning of the use of symbols in Masonry is the most preposterous description I have ever read in my lifetime. (By the way,

the dictionary meaning of the word "preposterous" is: "contrary to nature, reason, or common sense; absurd; senseless; foolish; silly; irrational; ridiculous.")

First, I would like to point out that Freemasonry as I know it does not need to be defended as it is very, very compatible to the teachings of the Holy Bible. It is not a religion nor does it claim to be.

I have no quarrel with either of these two people about their beliefs as they are free to believe as they please. This one thing I can say for sure that there is not a minister, preacher, pastor, evangelist, deacon, or any other person that stands behind the pulpit that does not preach Masonry if he is preaching the Word of God as it is written in the Holy Bible.

I am a Christian (57 years), a Baptist deacon (28 years), a Gideon (9 years), and a Mason (41 years). I am a member of First Baptist Church, Grenada.

Gerald Sargent  
Grenada

## Whittens retiring

Editor:

We are finishing a very happy and satisfying two-year experience as prayer coordinators of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. It has been a special pleasure and blessing to be a part of the Baptist Building "family."

We have worked through the associational prayer coordinators and the area prayer coordinators

to seek to encourage all the 2,000 churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention to have an intercessory prayer ministry.

We leave with the confidence that God will bring other volunteers to continue this important work. The experiences of our lives thus far have been that the Lord led us step by step into his place of service for our lives. This summer we will serve two weeks at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, co-hosting the Home and Foreign Mission Room during Home Mission Week and Jericho. In September and October, we will be in Spain to visit our youngest son, John, and his family, as well as visiting six cities within Spain and the Canary Islands where we worked as missionaries. One "bonus" will be seeing a little granddaughter we have never seen, along with her two brothers.

In 1994 we hope to do a short-term project overseas in some place where we will be using

Spanish. That seems a good stewardship of what we used for 40 years in our work.

We expect to be in some sort of mission work the rest of our lives.

Charles and Indy Whitten  
Retiring volunteer coordinators  
Prayer Ministry, MBCB

**Editor's Note: The Whittens have announced their second retirement, from the Prayer Ministry, effective June 30. Their last day in the MBCB office will be June 22.**

## Affirms Rankin

Editor:

It is not everyone who has the privilege of being part of a missionary prayer retreat as I once had in Indonesia atop a mountain — a place called Genderetta (I'm unsure of the spelling). There was no TV, no radio, no newspaper, just a dozen or so believers closeted there for a week to seek God's guidance (which came).

In that group were Jerry and Bobbye Rankin. It was at that time that it became obvious to me that God was going to use that couple in a mighty way. It was not known at that time just how or when. Later he was made an area director, then a vice president, and now the nominee for president of the Foreign Mission Board. All that is an affirmation of what I felt then.

In selecting Jerry we truly get "two for the price of one." I have said many times to many of you that Bobby (Jerry's wife) is the most effective intercessor "prayer" that I have ever known.

I am optimistic that when this nominee is elected by the SBC, great things will begin to happen for the furtherance of the gospel and the bringing of lost souls to God's kingdom, which is the bottom line that we strive for. To God be the glory.

W.W. Walley, president  
Mississippi Baptist Convention  
Waynesboro

# CLC decries "wanted child" speech by surgeon general nominee Elders

By Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP) — Joycelyn Elders' primary task as surgeon general, if she is confirmed, will be to make sure every child given birth in the United States is a wanted child, she recently said at an abortion rights conference.

The first way to strengthen families "is to make every child born in America a planned, wanted child," Elders said in early May. "And that will be my chief mission as your surgeon general."

Her comments drew immediate, negative response from the Christian Life Commission.

"Joycelyn Elders is for more than abortion rights; she's for abortion," said James A. Smith, the Christian Life Commission's director of government relations. "She seems to actually think it is a good thing. That the next surgeon general of the United States would have such an attitude about a prac-

tice which kills 1.6 million children each year is troubling, to say the least."

Elders made the remarks in a keynote speech at the first national conference of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights in early May in suburban Washington. RCAR provided an audio tape of her speech to Baptist Press.

Planned Parenthood and other abortion rights advocates commonly have used the "every child a wanted child" terminology in Elders' speech during the last two decades. Also in her speech, Elders, director of the Arkansas Department of Health, endorsed Medicaid funding for abortion; the French abortion pill, RU-486, and the Freedom of Choice Act, legislation in Congress which would strike down state restrictions on abortion now allowed under *Roe vs. Wade*.

Elders said she told a representative in the Arkansas legislature she is "about preventing pregnancy. I'm not about abortion." In addition to supporting abortion rights, she has advocated sex education and contraceptive distribution in public schools.

Elders, who is Methodist, also said the "way that we show that we are really Christians ... is first of all we are committed, not just concerned, about choice. And this group has shown that they are committed, and they are willing to do what they need to do to make choice a right for every woman."

Strode is director, media and news information, Washington office, CLC.

## Yeary accepts N. Phoenix call, replaces Jackson

PHOENIX, Ariz. (ABP) — Dan Yeary of Miami has accepted the offer to become pastor of the 23,000-member North Phoenix Church, the largest Southern Baptist congregation in the West.

Yeary will succeed Richard Jackson, one of Southern Baptists' most popular pulpites, who has led the Phoenix, Ariz., church for 25 years.

Jackson said he was not involved in the selection of his successor but was "pleasantly surprised" with the choice of Yeary. "He's a man of great energy," Jackson said. "He will do good and innovative things that, frankly, I didn't have the capability to do."

## TRUE FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

### HISTORICAL MUSICAL DRAMA

The remarkable story of the "Free State of Winston" and its 1862 historic neutrality convention, told delightfully in a production sparkling with music, dance and "hill country humor".

### DUAL DESTINY 1861-1865

Following the Civil War theme of the park, this theatre features life-size robotics in a production dedicated to the music of the North and South.

### LOONEY'S RIVERBOAT

"The Free State Lady" offers daily cruises during the season on the wild and scenic Sipsey River including a late afternoon dinner cruise.

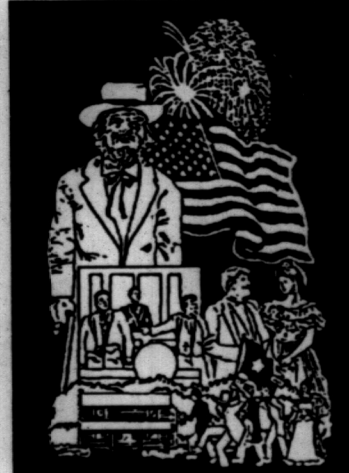
### LOONEY PUTT

This 18-hole miniature golf course is nestled on a hillside in the theatre complex and features "civil war" historical traps.

### SISTER SARAH'S KITCHEN

A period restaurant serving a "hill country" buffet on show days featuring chicken 'n dumplin' and crackling cornbread and buttermilk.

## LOONEY'S Amphitheater and Theme Park



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## GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY & HOMECOMING (1943-1993)

### Calvary Baptist Church Pascagoula, Mississippi

Dr. John D.W. Watts, Speaker

June 27, 1993

11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.

Dinner on Grounds



# Names in the News



**Evansville Church, Northwest Association,** recently recognized **Willie Hensely**, left, for her years of service in WMU work. A plaque was presented to her by Pheriba Baker, WMU director, and a book was donated to the church library in her honor. Bernette Fielder is pastor.



**Ronnie Hatfield**, left, was ordained to the gospel ministry by Tuscumbia Church, Booneville, on May 2. Hatfield, pastor of Osborne Creek Church, Prentiss Association; was presented the certificate of ordination by Ben Griffin, pastor of Tuscumbia.

## Montalbano receives degree at Mid-America

Michael P. Montalbano, pastor of First Church, Nesbit, graduated May 7 from the Mid-America Seminary with a doctor of theology degree. He has been the pastor of First Church since October 1991.



Montalbano

## SBTS awards doctoral degree

Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky., awarded degrees to Mississippians. Those receiving degrees were John T. Meadors, Jackson, doctor of philosophy; Sara Simpson Brown, Hattiesburg, master of divinity; and James I. Kelly, Greenwood, master of divinity.



Meadors

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)** — **Michael Duduit**, director of development and church relations at Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., will become the first full-time executive director of the American Academy of Ministry in Louisville, Ky., effective July 9. In addition to serving the academy — an interdenominational professional association and society for ministers — Duduit will continue as editor of *Preaching*, a professional journal for ministers. He also will serve as visiting professor of preaching at Southern Seminary, Louisville, teaching one class per semester during the 1993-94 academic year.

**Irene Martin**, a member of **Harperville Church, Harperville**, will teach a class for small church accompanists during the Church Music Conference at Ridgcrest Conference Center, June 19-25. Martin has recently completed a

new senior adult musical, "Witness — From Boaz to Branson," and has been on program staff at Baptist conference centers for the past 15 years.

**Lisa and John McDaniel** will be ministering through music at First Church, Isola, June 13, at the 11 a.m. service and in concert at 6 p.m.

**Woodville Heights Church, Jackson**, recently ordained **Danny Sephton** to the preaching ministry. Sephton recently graduated from Mississippi College and is presently available for service. He can be contacted at

**Woodville Heights Church**, telephone 372-5443.



**Joe Strahan**, left, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board member from Perry County, recently presented a \$2,500 check to **Paul Z. Ball**, interim pastor of Thompson Hill Mission Church, Perry County. The money was made possible through the Cooperative Missions Department of the MBCB, and was used to help start the Thompson Hill Mission, the second such work in Perry County since 1985. The work is co-sponsored by the Perry Association and First Church, Beaumont.



### The Thought Occurred to Me

by Don McGregor, editor emeritus, *Baptist Record*  
Foreword by Jerry Clower  
Details how Cooper worked with Jerry Rankin, Mississippian nominated for Foreign Mission Board president, to evangelize India. \$11 including postage.  
Mail to McGregor at P.O. Box 23105, Jackson, MS 39225.

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## Homecomings

**Rome (Sunflower):** June 13; 11 a.m.; Charles Guy, guest speaker; dinner at noon; singing in afternoon with local groups; Terry Tribble, pastor.

**County Line (Rankin):** June 13; 10:45 a.m.; Bryan W. Sherman, guest speaker; dinner on grounds; special music in afternoon; Ted Dukes, pastor.

**East Side, Richton:** June 13; 50th anniversary; Joe Dale Boutwell, guest speaker; dinner at noon; afternoon singing with The 1st Corinthians and other local talent; Francis Holder, pastor.

**38th Avenue, Hattiesburg:** June 13; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 10:55 a.m.; covered dish in fellowship hall at noon; Dixie Echoes, Pensacola, Fla., 2 p.m.; G. Wiley Abel, pastor.

**Bowlin (Attala):** June 13; 10:45 a.m.; dinner on grounds at noon; Bobby Waggoner, director of mis-

sions, guest speaker; Johnny Parks, pastor.

**Rehobeth, Pelahatchie:** June 13; Rick Hammerstrom, guest speaker for 11 a.m. service; Wendall Wiggins, former music director, music; lunch in fellowship hall at noon; singing in afternoon with New Generations, DeKalb; Martis Jenkins, pastor.

**Laurel Hill (Neshoba):** June 13; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; Dudley Winstead, guest speaker; dinner in fellowship hall at noon; afternoon service with special music; Wayne Griffith, pastor.

**New Providence, Hazlehurst (Copiah):** June 13; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; Byron Malone, former pastor, guest speaker; covered dish dinner, fellowship hall, noon; afternoon singing and church history reading, 1:15 p.m.; no evening services; Gene Blailock, interim pastor.

## Native Mississippians receive various degrees from New Orleans Seminary

Six Mississippians received their doctoral degrees from New Orleans Seminary during commencement exercises on May 21. They include: Robert Boyd, Meridian, doctor of ministry; Daniel Caldwell, Caledonia, doctor of philosophy; Chuck Grant, Magnolia, doctor of philosophy; John Herring, Slatton, doctor of ministry; Greg Martin, Long Beach, doctor of ministry; and Brad Roderick, Jackson, doctor of philosophy.

Receiving their masters' of divinity degrees during the same ceremony were Charles David Smith, Ellisville; Lloyd A. Sweatt III, Jackson, pastor of Duck Hill Church, Duck Hill; Scott Wilson

Holder, Monroe, La., pastor of Knoxo Church, Tylertown; Trent Allen, Jackson; Chris Cochran, Hickory; and Timothy Keith Moore, Leeds, Ala., pastor of Phalti Church, Prentiss.

Receiving other masters' degrees were James F. Taylor Jr., Marietta, Ga., youth and activities director at Jayess Church, Jayess, master of arts in Christian education; Jerry W. Freeman, Purvis, master of arts in Christian education; Martin J. Romero, Prentiss, master of arts degree in Christian education; Debra Kay Dodson, Shannon,

master of arts in Christian education degree; Tammy Welch Lee, Tupelo, master of arts degree in Christian education; and Ian David Richardson, Madison, master of church music degree.

Receiving other degrees were Brady Steve White, Jackson, pastor of Sardis Church, White Oak, associate of Christian studies degree; Kelly McGinnis, Memphis, minister of music at Lexie Church, Tylertown, bachelor of general studies degree; and Eddie Bullock, Houston, bachelor of general studies degree.

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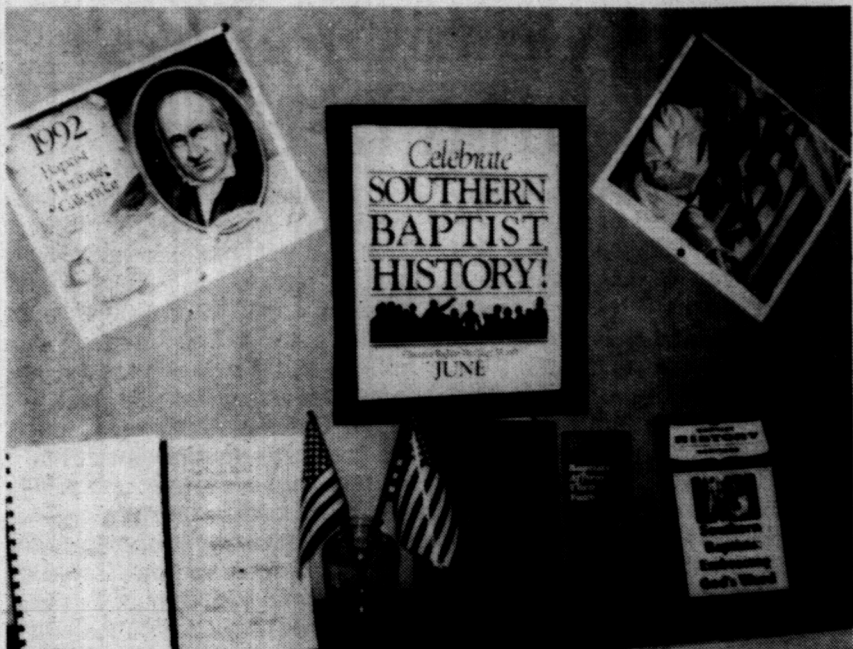
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# Just for the Record



## West Point celebrates heritage

First Church, West Point, commemorated June 1993 Baptist Heritage Month with attractive displays in the corridor of its fellowship building. The library window was arranged by Kay Stanley, librarian. The theme was "Southern Baptists: Embracing God's Word." Allie Vance is chairman of the history committee. Jackie Hamilton is pastor.

## Missionary News

Donald and Jo Redmon, missionaries to Costa Rica, are on the field (address: Apartado 322-2050, San Pedro, Montes de Oca, Costa Rica). She is the former Jo Eubanks of Pontotoc County.

Errol and Mary Simmons, representatives to Eastern Europe, are on the field (address: Mandula utca 25, H-1025 Budapest, Hungary). The former Mary Ishee of Mississippi, she was born in Jones County and grew up near Laurel.

Eugene and Marjorie Verner, missionaries to Ghana since 1958, have retired from active missionary service. They served at the Ghana Baptist Seminary in Abuakwa. They may be addressed c/o

Temple Baptist Church, 314 S. 23rd Ave., Hattiesburg, MS 39401.

## Revival Dates

**Concord, Pelahatchie:** June 13-18; James Fancher, interim pastor of Pelahatchie Church, evangelist; James Stansbury, Concord, music; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; Mon-Fri., 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.; LaVerne Summerlin, pastor.

**Bethlehem, Pinola:** June 13-16; Sunday, 11 a.m.; lunch in fellowship hall; week nights, 7 p.m.; Roger Lee, guest speaker; Jerome McLendon, pastor.

Valley Hill Church, Greenwood, will hold a Lay Renewal weekend, beginning 7 p.m. June 11, continuing through June 13. Visitors are welcome. For more information, call (601) 453-9499.

The National Library of Poetry, Owings Mills, Md., has announced that it will award \$12,000 in prizes to 250 poets in its North American Poetry Contest. Deadline is June 30, 1993. For more information, contact the National Library of Poetry at 11419 Cronridge Dr., P.O. Box 704-XZ, Owings Mills, MD 21117.

The Pearl River Association sponsored an Area Crusade May 2-6 at the Picayune High School stadium with Kelly Green as guest evangelist. Other guests were: Mike and Faye Speck, Tulsa, Okla.; Luke Garrett, Jackson; Lee Pitts, Birmingham; Ronnie Hill, Dallas; and Joe Emmert, Morristown, Tenn. High attendance was 4,500. There were 425 professions of faith reported.

Parkhill Church, Jackson, will observe its 37th anniversary June 13. Following the 11 a.m. worship service, there will be a covered dish dinner in fellowship hall. Delton Beall, Claremore, Okla., will be the guest speaker. Jimmy Bailey, Jackson, will lead the music. Singing in the sanctuary following lunch.

A Bible Study Workshop will be held at First Church, Brookhaven, Sept. 9-11, sponsored by Precept Ministries of Chattanooga, Tenn. Inductive Bible study skills of observation, interpretation, application, and discussion group leadership will be featured. Call 833-8223 for more information.

Deer Creek Church, Rolling Fork, will have a Florida youth group presenting "Live it to the Max II, Be the One" on June 28 at 7 p.m. Michael E. King is pastor.



First Church, Bruce, held its GA Recognition Service on May 12. The service included 40 girls and leaders.



The fourth annual Mother/Daughter Seminar recently was held at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center. Speakers included Cindy Townsend, second from left, youth minister at First Church, Jackson, and Ginnie Ingram, RN, MS, second from right, Anatomy and Physiology instructor at Jackson Academy. Also pictured are MBMC education coordinators who organized the seminar, Nancy Helman, RN, MN, left, and Sandra Holman, RN, MSN, right.



E.C. Farr RA Chapter of Second Church, Greenville, Washington Association, recently received top honors in competition on Lad and Crusader Day with over 300 RAs at Central Hills Retreat, Kosciusko. RAs who won first place, pictured, from left, were Ben Edwards, Chris Holley, Andy Edwards, Steven Taylor, David Edwards, and Allen Sanders; back row, are the leaders Tim Reynolds, Mack Mooney, and James Kerr. Steven Taylor won the speak out competition and received the highest award gold ribbon and medallion.

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## BSU Executive Council at MSU

Newly elected members of the Mississippi State University Baptist Student Union Executive Council pictured, seated, from left, are Allison Jones, publicity director, Columbus; Colbey Penton, president, Picayune; Wendy McKay, community missions coordinator, Columbus; Bonnie Barker, student outreach coordinator, Madison; Jennifer Morrow, social director, Brandon; and Kim Ethridge, student outreach events, Hattiesburg.

Standing, from left, are Anna Cheatham, discipleship coordinator, Madison; Matt Dunn, student center director, Gulfport; Jody Anderson, international student coordinator, Randolph; Brad Benton, vice president, Ocean Springs; Michael Kelly, intramural director, Brandon; Brad Rigby, worship/study director, Louisville; and Kathryn Clayton, mission director, Clinton. Not pictured is Dan Glenn, fine arts director, Raymond.

## Florida college grants degrees to four native Mississippians

Four Mississippians have been granted the bachelor of theology degree by Florida Baptist Theological College in Graceville, Fla. They are: from Jackson, Stephen

N. Evans and Timothy E. Evans; from Pascagoula, Daniel M. Casper; and from Gulfport, Richard L. Allen, who was graduated magna cum laude.

### Devotional...

## The blessings of being a pastor

By Greg Potts

I had just concluded my final Sunday as pastor of the church. On Monday, I was packing my books. Around 3:30 in the afternoon the secretary's two children came into the office. The little boy stuck his head in the door and said "Hey, Brother Greg." I normally responded by asking how school had gone. This time he asked me if I would be around on Wednesday and I told him I would. That seemed to satisfy him.

Wednesday came and we were very busy with moving. On my way home I noticed our secretary's two children had just gotten off the bus and remembered what I had told the little boy. He was standing on the porch in front of the office. He looked at me, and said, "Thanks for visiting me in the hospital." He turned and walked away and I was stunned.

I remembered that on one occasion, and maybe two, he had been in the hospital to have some surgery. On both occasions I had gone to see him. I really did not think about it at the time; I was doing what I thought I should do. He was special, yes, and his mom was because I worked with her, but still, I thought any pastor would. I really did not realize, however, that to him it was special; to me it was part of my job. He appreciated my coming.

At that moment, the Lord impressed upon me that one of the joys of being a pastor is ministry. Being a pastor is not all about receiving recognition or an award, or growing a huge church, or being invited to speak at a state convention or a pastor's conference, but it is really about ministering to people. I did not realize what one visit had meant to him. He was not the only one. Many others during the two weeks had written notes or called to thank me for ministering to them.

Again, I was shocked. These people were thanking me for doing what I thought was my job. I failed to see the significance of each visit, but again I was reminded of the importance of ministry, touching lives, and helping people.

The Lord used those two weeks to remind me what being a pastor is all about. I since rededicated myself to that task. I have asked God to help me have a pastor's heart and listen to people, love people, care for them, and to be there in times of need. Thank you, Lord, for that little boy. Thank you for using him to remind me of what being a pastor is all about.

Potts is pastor of First Church, Vancleave.

## Defense Readiness Council gives "call to arms" for retired military

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Admitting that the road ahead is a difficult and complex one, retired Marine Lieutenant General Charles G. Cooper, spokesman for the Defense Readiness Council, "The Voice of Military Experience," recently announced a nationwide fundraising drive to ensure that the message of the council is heard regarding homosexuals serving in the military.

"Although we know we are on the right side of this issue, we are also aware of the high level of sophistication and massive financial support the homosexual lobby has gathered on this one facet of their 'gay agenda,'" said General Cooper. "Therefore, we are calling on Americans starting with retired military personnel, both officer and enlisted, to come forward and assist in this critical fight. The

very foundation of our military services is now in jeopardy."

Admiral H. Thomas Moorer and other members of the council have begun a specific letter-writing campaign to their fellow flag officers and service members. "We are all in this together," said Moorer, "and we simply cannot stand by and let the legacy of our lifetimes of service be degraded, marginalized, or ignored by any special interest group."

"The council is unanimous in its commitment to ensure that the security of the American people is not compromised or weakened for a social agenda that is incompati-

ble with the one purpose for which the United States military exists. That one purpose is winning the nation's wars," noted Cooper. "This is a call to arms that must not be missed. The future of our military as the best and most ready force ever assembled is at stake."

The Defense Readiness Council is a group of retired senior military officers whose aim is to enact legislation to codify military regulations prohibiting homosexuals from serving in the military. For more information contact Defense Readiness Council, P.O. Box 15351, Alexandria, VA 22309; Telephone (703) 683-5004.

## SWBTS graduates nine

Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, awarded 370 degrees in its commencement ceremonies on May 14. Among those graduating were nine Mississippians. Receiving masters' degrees were Timothy M. Shields, master of divinity; Dawn Windham Davidson, master of divinity in Biblical languages;

Jerry D. Odom, master of arts in religious education; James D. Spencer, master of arts in religious education; and Lori B. Chelette, master of arts in church social services.

Receiving master of music degrees were Gary R. Gray, Bevin L. Gregory, John D. McDonough, and Stephen R. Poole.

## Asbury awards degree to pastor

Tommy Purvis of Calvary Church, Belmont, received the doctor of missiology degree at Asbury Theological Seminary in



Purvis

Wilmore, Ky., on May 23. His studies of missions emphasized short-term volunteers in world missions. Purvis became pastor of Calvary Church in January 1993. He previously served Tishomingo County as 4-H Youth Agent and County Agent. He holds degrees from Mississippi State University and Southern Seminary.

## Mississippian receives degree from MWBTS

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — J. Jeff Johnson, a native of Jackson, was among 105 individuals receiving degrees during recent commencement exercises at Midwestern Seminary. Johnson received the doctor of ministry degree.

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## HOBBS

From page 3

Baptists in SBC decision-making "rather than just a very small group."

In the most recent round of appointments, supporters of the Fellowship were excluded from any leadership positions. According to Hobbs, Chapman defended those appointments, saying the SBC presidents have responded to God's leadership in making their appointments.

"That's papacy, one man saying

"I think I know what's best for Southern Baptists," Hobbs said.

Hobbs insisted the report of the SBC Peace Committee, of which he was a member, called for balanced representation in SBC appointments and that SBC presidents have violated the convention's action overwhelmingly approving that report.

Elder said he had received a cordial phone call from the Fellowship's Cecil Sherman after his report went out. He has not heard from Morris Chapman, he said.

Hobbs said leaders on both sides have "crystallized their opinions. We need new people."

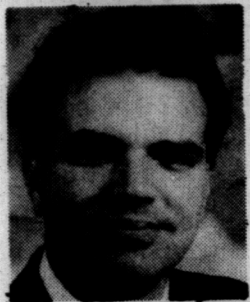
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## Uniform Christ, our model



By Chuck Pourciau  
Philippians 2:1-16

I grew up playing just about every sport that involved some kind of ball. I remember one day at high school basketball practice when we were working on a defensive drill. One teammate properly executed the drill after several unsatisfactory attempts by other players. Our coach stopped everything and said, "Wait just a minute. Did you boys see how he did that? That is the way I want it done."

I think Paul was doing something similar in this passage. The Philippians had been having some problems, especially in the area of unity. Paul pointed to Jesus and said, "Did you see how he did that? That is the way it ought to be done." What was Paul exhorting them to do?

**Exhortation to unity (vv. 1-4).** Paul presented three teachings in these verses. First, he gave the basis for unity (v. 1). In essence Jesus was the basis for their unity. After all, can there be any other basis for church unity? Can unity be based on similar dress, economic standing, family relations, or on all supporting the same college football team? Jesus is the only factor that all Christians have in common, so he is the only basis for unity. To try to achieve unity in any other way is to fail.

Second, he made the appeal for unity (v. 2). He called for them to be like minded, have the same love, and be one in spirit and purpose. We can have like minds, because they have been transformed by Jesus. We can have the same love because God's love dwells in us. We must have the same purpose, and that purpose must guide our actions. Too many churches are driven by power plays and status quo maintenance rather than the Holy Spirit of God.

Third, he gave the result of unity (vv. 3-4). If every member considers others better than himself, nothing can break the unity of the church. Disunity is a result of selfishness gaining a foothold in the church.

**Exhortation to imitate Christ (vv. 5-11).** Paul then urged the Philippians to take on the attitude of Christ. What would that entail? First, it should inspire the Christian to be an unselfish servant (vv. 6-7). Jesus was God himself, but he chose to become a servant. So often Christians do just the opposite. In arrogance, we try to elevate ourselves by pulling others down. Let's just remember what Jesus did.

Second, it should inspire the Christian to model the humble, sacrificial service of Jesus (v. 8). Jesus' sacrificial service led him to the cross. That example should inspire Christians to sacrificial service.

Third, it should inspire Christians to allow God to do the exalting (vv. 9-11). God exalted Jesus to the highest place and all will one day acknowledge that he is Lord of all. Christians should not wait for *one day* but should acknowledge his Lordship now.

**Exhortation to spiritual growth (vv. 12-13).** Paul pointed out that salvation was not a one time event but a continual process. This can be seen in his calling on the Philippians to continue to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Not only is it continual, it is a process that is carried out by the grace of God at work in the Christian.

We must realize that salvation is a continual process that takes work. We do not walk the aisle and then just sit back and wait to be ushered into glory. Also, the requirement of the believer remains constant throughout the salvation process. He is to exercise faith in God. To grow in Christ means that one must open his life up to the working of the Holy Spirit. It is not doing something for God. It is allowing God to do something in you. That takes faith. Salvation is faith from beginning to end (Romans 1:17).

**Exhortation to holiness (vv. 14-16).** Christians are to be blameless children of God in the midst of a sinful world. That is what it means to be holy. It means to be set apart while still being in a sinful world. It is then that the child of God can be an effective witness as he holds out the word of life to this sinful world.

Too often we try to see how close we can get to the world and still be *Christian*. Too frequently we try to see how much we can be like the world and still be a *child of God*. God is tired of the church snuggling up to the world. He calls on us to be pure and blameless, and until we are, the world will only scoff at us when we hold out the word of life.

Pourciau is pastor, First Church, Louisville.

## Bible Book God's offer of salvation



By Guy A. Hughes  
Isaiah 55:1-12

I have read with amazement how thousands are flocking to the floating casinos on the Mississippi River and the Gulf Coast. Amazing, because they will sacrifice time and money, drive miles to gamble, in the hopes of winning big things which moth and rust corrupt, but so unwilling to invest it all in the eternal kingdom of Christ. What will it profit a man to gain the whole world but lose his own soul? While the devil barter his wares for the souls of men, God patiently extends the free gift of salvation. Sadly, many pass God's free offer only to gamble with their souls for the pleasure of the moment. What are the true blessings in life? What is it that we truly need?

**God's invitation to the covenant blessings (55:1-5).** Water is precious in the Holy Land today as in Isaiah's day. In the Bible, water was used to represent two things. First, it satisfies the thirst of everything God created. Second, water was used as a metaphor for a number of things, including determination (Amos 5:24), purification (Isa. 1:16; Ezek. 36:25), and salvation (John 3:5; 4:10-15). Water was important for survival so highly treasured. Vendors would travel up and down the streets selling a drink to dry and thirsty throats. Isaiah used this picture as an illustration of God's desire for us to drink from the fountain of salvation. Five commands are mentioned in these verses: come, buy, eat, listen, and incline. These commands demonstrate the importance to respond to God's call. He asks the question, "Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?" (v. 2). In other words, why spend your money for earthly things which cannot bring lasting satisfaction? Money may provide for physical needs but it cannot meet spiritual needs. Jesus put it this way, "I am the bread of life: he who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35).

**God's call to repent and be pardoned (55:6-12).** Isaiah called upon the exiles to seek the Lord while he may be found. Their bondage in Babylon should serve as a stark warning to the price paid for failure to heed God's call to repentance. Their deliverance should serve as a vivid reminder that God's mercy is extended to turn them from their sin. The wicked were called upon to repent and forsake their way. God is reaching to us in his love and mercy, longing to forgive us, before it is too late. We must retrain our thinking because "our thoughts are not his thoughts and our ways are not his ways" (v. 8).

People's thoughts center upon themselves rather than God's will for them. God has ordered this world (v. 10). The changes of the season, movement of the celestial bodies, and nature itself reveals this order. God desires for our lives to be ordered as well. Nothing should be left to chance. God is in control of all things and desires for us to experience his pardon and submit to his lordship for our lives. Then we will experience peace. This lasting peace is not found in earthly treasures but in trusting God.

When death came to a notorious character in a small community and his coffin was being carried in a hearse to the cemetery, his mourners passed some of the places he had formerly frequented. First, they drove by a tavern where he had spent much time and squandered many a paycheck, but the old temptation to indulge in alcohol no longer enticed him. A few blocks down the street they came to a racetrack where he had lost thousands of dollars "on the horses," but the urge to gamble was no longer felt. A little farther on, the procession went by a theater he had often attended, but the vulgar titles on the marquee and the suggestive pictures plastered around the entrance had no effect on him now. None of these vices and allurements could attract him, for he was dead to them all!

"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body as instruments of righteousness" (Rom. 6:11-13).

Do not gamble with your fate in eternity! Give yourself to Jesus today and every day!

Hughes is pastor, Friendship Church, Grenada.

## Life and Work Assisting other churches



By Laura Russell  
Acts 11:20-30

When the church accepted Peter's testimony that the gospel was also for Gentiles, Christianity exploded into Gentile areas and large numbers became believers. The seeds of this missionary work had been sown after Stephen's death when many believing Jews were persecuted and scattered, settling in far-away cities and spreading the gospel.

**The establishment of the Antioch church (vv. 20-21).** Persecution spread the believers into Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and the gospel went with them. Most spoke only to Jews, but in Antioch some Gentiles were converted. It was in Antioch that Christianity was launched on its worldwide mission and where believers aggressively preached to the Gentiles. Phillip had preached in Samaria, but the Samaritans were part Jewish (8:5); Peter preached to Cornelius but he already worshiped God (10:2). Believers who scattered spread the gospel to other Jews in the lands they fled to (11:19). This was the first time believers actively began sharing the good news with Gentiles. In Antioch, the church did not go to people who were Jews or half Jews; nor did it wait to be approached by Gentiles seeking admission. Deliberately and of set purpose, spontaneously and without waiting for invitation, it preached the gospel to the Gentiles. Christianity is finally launched in its worldwide mission.

**Response of the Jerusalem church (v. 22).** The new venture was immediately successful, and the mother church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to supervise and confirm the new church. Barnabas was gifted in providing encouragement to the new Christians, and he exhorted the new converts that "with purpose of heart" they would be faithful and would persevere.

**The ministry of Barnabas (vv. 23-24).** Barnabas gives us a wonderful example of how to help new Christians. He demonstrated strong faith; he ministered joyfully with kindness and encouragement; and he taught them further lessons about God. From what we learn about Barnabas in Acts, he seems to have been generous, very friendly, cautious in his denunciation of others, quick to recognize the ability of people, and to comprehend the meaning of God's activity in history. With such qualifications, he was the ideal person to minister to the church.

**The assistance of Saul (vv. 25-26).** For about nine years we hear nothing of Paul. The last glimpse we had of him, he was escaping by way of Caesarea to Tarsus (9:30). No doubt for nine years he had been witnessing for Christ in his native town. He had been preparing himself, and now the task for which he had been destined was ready for him. Barnabas, with a profound wisdom, put him in charge of it. The young church was a curious mixture of Jews and Gentiles. It is significant that this is the first place where believers were called Christians, or "Christ Ones," because all they had in common was Christ. Christ can cross all boundaries and unify all people.

Barnabas and Paul stayed at Antioch for a full year, teaching the new believers. They could have left for the new cities, but they saw the importance of follow-through and training. This was especially essential for Gentile converts because they would not be acquainted with the background of Christianity as were the Jews.

**The ministry of the Antioch church (vv. 27-30).** In these verses the prophets come upon the scene. In the early church, they were very important people. They were men who foretold the future, but even more, they were men who foretold the will of God. Agabus, the prophet, predicted that there would be a severe famine all over the world.

This whole incident is very significant, for it shows that the early Christians realized the unity of the church. If there was famine in Palestine, the first instinct of the church at Antioch was to help. They knew in those days that they were all members of the body of Christ. To them, it was unthinkable that one part of the church should be in trouble and another should do nothing about it. They had that width of vision that saw the church as a whole. They were not just members of the church of Antioch — they were members of the Church of Christ! May we have this same width of vision when we see fellow congregations in need.

Russell is a member of First Church, Brandon.



# capsules

**MONEY SHORTAGE THREATENS RADIO PROGRAMS REACHING NORTH AFRICANS: LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)** — Lack of funds may kill Southern Baptist support for two weekly radio programs reaching the Sous Berbers of North Africa, a people group considered to be one of the most closed to the gospel in the world. Southern Baptists have contributed \$90,000 each of the last two years to fund its part of a cooperative effort with 23 other Great Commission Christian groups. The programs have led to many conversions in the region and the formation of fellowship groups for worship, said Pete Dunn, director of Southern Baptist media work in the Middle East. One university student has been witnessing in his home village deep in the Sahara Desert and now has a group of seven who meet with him, he said. About 6.25 million people speak the language of the Sous Berbers, one of the largest of four main Berber groups across North Africa. Almost all are Muslim and considered one of the most difficult groups to reach for Christ.

**TWO TRIPS TO KAZAKHSTAN CANCELED, VISAS SLOW: RICHMOND, Va. (BP)** — Southern Baptists have canceled two volunteer trips to Kazakhstan and might have to cancel two others because government officials have slowed the release of entry visas to a trickle. In addition to the visa slowdown, host families for the volunteers are growing scarcer as the former Soviet republic continues to slide deeper into the economic turmoil that emerged when the region began shifting from communism to capitalism. Kazakh hosts were much easier to find on earlier friendship tours. "Families who were happy to host Americans for the novelty of the experience now want to be paid, if they are willing to be hosts at all," said a communique from Alma Ata, Kazakhstan. But as a newly emerging world power, Kazakhstan is struggling now to hold steady amid strong nationalistic and religious forces. Most people in the Central Asian nation descended from Turks and consider themselves Muslims.

**FALWELL'S 'OLD TIME GOSPEL HOUR' AGREES TO PAY \$50,000 FINE TO IRS: LYNCHBURG, Va. (EP)** — Jerry Falwell's "Old Time Gospel Hour" has agreed to pay a \$50,000 fine to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) after an audit showed that some of Falwell's ministries violated tax laws. The IRS found that some ministry personnel were used to raise money for a Moral Majority-related political action committee, called the "I Love America Committee," which backed congressional candidates. Federal law prohibits non-profit agencies from participating in political campaigns on behalf of particular candidates. Both the Moral Majority and the I Love America PAC have been disbanded. The IRS has also revoked the tax-exempt status of Falwell's Liberty Federation, ruling that it did not operate solely for religious and charitable purposes.

**GLORIETA NOT AFFECTED BY MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS: GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)** — While federal and state investigators seek the cause of a mysterious and sometimes fatal illness in the area of the Navajo Reservation straddling New Mexico and Arizona, no symptoms of the illness have been reported at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

**AMERICAN CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT FREED AFTER 71 DAYS IN PRISON: CAIRO, Egypt (EP)** — Three American Christians were released May 10 after 71 days of imprisonment in Cairo, Egypt. A New Zealander was also released with the prisoners, but Egyptian Christian Abdul Hamid Adil Masab, whose name reportedly also appeared on the presidential release order, had not yet been accounted for. The five men were arrested February 22 and accused of proselytizing, although no formal charges were made against them. "They were pardoned for a crime they were never charged with," said Steven Snyder, president of Christian Solidarity International (CSI). There is no confirmation of the release of Abdel Masab, the Egyptian Christian. Masab faces possible brutal treatment in prison and a lengthy sentence. According to CSI, the last word received of Masab was about his placement in a psychiatric facility where he was undergoing "evaluation."

**SOUTHERN BAPTISTS TO CUT SUPPORT TO ARAB BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY: LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)** — In a major policy change, the Foreign Mission Board will phase out support for the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon and instead set up a decentralized education program throughout the Middle East. The change will leave the seminary in Beirut in the hands of Middle Eastern Baptists under a new 11-member board of trustees made up of Baptists from Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. The present board has half Foreign Mission Board personnel and half Middle Eastern Baptists. Middle Eastern Baptists support the plan, but some are concerned about raising \$100,000 a year to operate the school as board support phases out over the next three years. This year the seminary will get \$6,000 from World Vision, an interdenominational missions group. Leaders say they must get support from many sources to keep the school open.

## Ministry in Cajun region yields pockets of committed believers

By David Winfrey

**GOLDEN MEADOW, La. (BP)** — Herman Callais keeps two nets in his truck. The Cajun commercial fisherman's first net is made of green nylon; his second is paper with a leather cover.

"This is my other net," Callais explained, holding out a French-language Bible. "With one I catch fish and the other I catch men."

The Southern Baptist pastor has preached the gospel in the French-culture region of southern Louisiana most of his life. Raised as a fisherman, he continues that work to support his ministry.

A pastor with another job is unusual here because the Catholic priest is the only familiar religious figure to many residents. But Southern Baptists have about 200 churches in the 22 parishes that make up Acadiana, Louisiana's French-culture region.

Long before Cuban migration to Miami made south Florida culturally distinct, southern Louisiana was already different from the rest of the country. With its pervasive French language and culture, much of Acadiana feels more French than American — only with bayous and alligators, not rolling hills and farmland.

"This area, since 1700, has never melted in the melting pot," said Elie Woerner, language missions director for the Louisiana Convention and a native of France.

About one-quarter of the state's 4.2 million residents claim at least some French ancestry, said Marc David of the state's Council on the Development of French in Louisiana. "You've still got roughly 6% of the population that speaks French in the home."

In addition to unique music and

cuisine, David noted that the rural lifestyle results in tightly knit families, with land passed down through generations.

Callais said, "You fight mosquitos; you fight gnats. But in spite of all that, for these people it's home."

The Catholic influence and strong family ties make Southern Baptist work more difficult, said Woerner. "They may not be very strong Catholics, but it's a part of their culture."

Mission pastor Louis Charrier said, "We've seen some decisions but it's very hard to get them baptized."

The first Baptist missionary to the area was Adolphe Stagg, appointed by the Louisiana Convention in 1884.

Baptists' entry into traditionally Catholic areas caused turmoil, Woerner recounted. "In one town, there was a city ordinance stating that the only religion allowed in that town would be the Catholic religion. Now we have a strong Baptist church (there) with several missions."

In the 1960s, the Brotherhood Commission bought a boat called "Brotherly Love" for a missionary so he could visit Ile de Jean Charles, an island inaccessible by car.

"When he got at the bend he would blow the horn and the people would know that he was going to the mission church to have a service," Woerner recalled.

Today, church starts in Acadiana have fewer resources than those elsewhere in the state. The 22 French-culture parishes have 30% of Louisiana's population but less than 15% of the state's Southern Baptist churches, according to U.S. Census and Uniform Church Letter figures.

Despite difficulties, the work pays good dividends when someone is reached for Christ, Charrier reminded. "The Cajun people are very hard-working, very industrious. Usually when they get saved they're very committed to their church and soul-winning."

Winfrey is associate director, IMB.



**FISHER OF MEN** — Raised as a fisherman, Cajun pastor Herman Callais continues that trade to support his ministry in Acadiana, the French-culture region of southern Louisiana. The area is unique from the rest of the country, with its pervasive French language and culture. Southern Baptists face strong Catholic influences in efforts to start churches here. (BP photo by David Winfrey)

### Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx  
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JCÜZ ZO KROCOWACO KRO GACT AW KRO  
RUCHOBK, KRUK RO YEGG BOPT WACKR GUDA-  
COCB EPKA REB RUCHOBK.

LUKKROY PEPO: KRECKZ-OEMRK

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error.

Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Twelve: Thirty.

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